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volume concerning the instructions issued to the city executive authorities by the central government; and two volumes devoted respectively to the administration of the poor law and to the county townships in the province of Westphalia. Each volume contains notes by the compiler in explanation of the laws treated.

These books are little more than reprints of the laws with explanations of obscure points. They do not attempt a scientific discussion of the various subjects set forth; but they are convenient in size, and will be found extremely useful in studying the present local institutions of Prussia.

FRANK J. GOODNOW.

La France sous l'ancien régime. Par le vicomte DE BROC.
Paris, E. Plon, Nourrit et Cie, 1887.—8vo, 424 pp.

The subject which the Vicomte de Broc has chosen is not a novel one, but it is of the greatest importance and the greatest interest. Though much has been written on the condition and the government of France during the eighty years before the Revolution, that period is hazy in the minds of most English readers. The dramatic annals of the Revolution are familiar, but the conditions which slowly led up to the most important event in modern times have received but little study from English scholars. They possess a charm for all who care to read of a brilliant society which has perished from the earth, and a value for all who wish to learn the lessons which history has to teach.

The present is the result of all the past, and the long progress of the French monarchy had its influence on the final overthrow; yet in the years that followed the death of Louis XIV we can trace the immediate causes of the downfall of that ancient government. When the "grand monarque" died, it was not too late so to reform the administration that the Bourbons should have become constitutional rulers over a prosperous and contented people. When Louis XVI ascended the throne, fifty-nine years later, social conditions had so shaped themselves, political traditions and religious beliefs had so altered, that the endeavors of an amiable king to improve the lot of his people only hastened his own ruin.

France became what Metternich called an intermittent monarchy, and now, for nearly twenty years, she has been a republic. The most ardent democrat can not claim that her republican government has been in all respects successful. Its temporary errors do not, indeed, prove that it is doomed to final failure. The republic found France suffering under the most disastrous defeat which she had experienced since the fall of the first Napoleon—a defeat for which no parallel could be found in her annals during the three hundred and fifty years preceding the Revolu-

tion. This is the first serious and continued experiment that the French have made in popular government. It is something that the republic should have lasted for almost twenty years in a country where political changes have, during this century, been so sudden and so frequent. Still, ephemeral administrations, public scandals, an increasing debt, internal instability, and a diminished influence abroad, are not satisfactory to French pride or French patriotism. It is not unnatural that some should turn back with regret to the period when, under a strong and centralized government, France was the first power in Europe. The study of the régime which the Revolution destroyed, thus bears closely on the politics of the day. While some see in those who overthrew the former government the enlightened harbingers of a better day, others find in their acts little but folly, greed and fanaticism.

The old régime is therefore a subject not only of historic interest, but of present importance. We regret to say, however, that we do not think the Vicomte de Broc has given material assistance to its study. Though one might be far from agreeing with many of his views as to the condition of France prior to the Revolution, yet there is nothing in this book to criticise very severely. It is not marred by special inaccuracies, nor by strong prejudices, nor by grave faults of matter or manner, but we fail to discover any good reason why it should have been written at all. The author declares that democracy in France has shown that it is incapable of governing itself, and he confesses the hope that the illustrious house of French kings will yet bring to that country the blessings of a modern monarchy. He points out many merits in the old régime, and yet he by no means glosses over its serious defects. He views it, indeed, as it might naturally be regarded by a French nobleman, but a nobleman of education and intelligence, who recognizes the fact that the return of such a government as that of Louis XIV is no more to be expected or desired than the reappearance of the megatherium. The trouble with this book is that it tells us nothing new, and that it is little more than a collection of scraps and bits of by no means recondite information. Its writer has, apparently, made no extensive study into the institutions of which he treats. He has not pored over manuscripts, nor occupied his hours in ransacking the contents of the public offices. The authorities he cites are works, all of which are familiar to any student of French history, and many of which are familiar to the general reader.

If one desires a philosophical and masterly analysis of the old régime, he will find it in de Tocqueville, whose great work has not been superseded by anything that has since been written. If he wishes a vast amount of information, collected from original authorities, skilfully arranged and rendered interesting by a vivacious and a brilliant style, he

can read Taine's *Ancien Régime*. If he is a student, and seeks to become familiar with the precise nature of the former institutions of France, he can learn much from Chéruel's *Dictionnaire des Institutions*, and many similar works.

The Vicomte de Broc has not added to our store of information concerning the old régime, and he has not the art of arrangement, or of analysis, or of philosophical deduction, which can convert the researches of others into forms that shall attract the public attention. His work is not of special value to the student. It is not of special interest to the ordinary reader; and so, although it is temperate in tone, respectable in scholarship, and moderate in bulk, it does not seem to be an important contribution to French history.

JAMES BRECK PERKINS.

History of Prussia under Frederic the Great. By HERBERT TUTTLE. Vols. I and II. Boston, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1888.—xvi, 308 and 334 pp.

Professor Tuttle, whose *History of Prussia to the Accession of Frederic the Great* has done so much for a proper understanding, in this country, of the growth and consolidation of the Prussian state in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, has taken up the thread of the narrative where he left it off in his former book, and, in the present two volumes, carries us down from the beginning of Frederic's reign to the outbreak of the Seven Years' war.

Mr. Tuttle is no hero worshipper. His admiration for the great king is not altogether an unmixed one. Yet he by no means underrates the extraordinary genius of the man, his keenness of judgment, his boldness of action, his almost unlimited capacity for work. And since Carlyle's *Friedrich II* there has been perhaps no other book in English or American literature which draws the figure of the king as the centre and main-spring in the political organization of the Prussia of that time in outlines so clear and strong. The main efforts of recent historical writers on Frederic's reign have been directed toward details. A great mass of new material has been accumulated, none of it so important as the *Politische Correspondenz* and the various other publications from the Prussian archives. But Mr. Tuttle is the first to bring this new material to bear upon the whole of Frederic's government — the first, since Carlyle, to gather the scattered researches about various phases of Frederic's policy and character into one complete and well-rounded picture of the man.¹

¹ In Germany, Prof. W. Oncken, in his *Zeitalter Friedrichs des Grossen* (Berlin, 1881), has undertaken a task somewhat similar to that of Professor Tuttle, although different in its compass.